



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE BOY AND HIS BOOK

EDWIN L. MILLER
Detroit, Michigan

A student at Yale was once asked, "Did you take Greek?" He replied, "No, but I was exposed to it." In this anecdote there is contained the germ of the whole philosophy of books and their choice for boys. "You may lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink." You may print lists of the best books by the thousand, but you cannot make the boys read them. All that you can do is to expose the boys to their influence and, if they take, to thank your stars, provided the result is such as you desire. A certain eminent educator has indeed suggested that it would be well to place all of the books which one desires a boy to read in a locked bookcase and label it "Forbidden Fruit, Highly Improper for Boys." The result will always be the same—a boy will read eagerly and thoroughly.

The foregoing remarks are based upon the assumption that reading is a desirable practice. Were it not better done, however, as others use, to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Neaera's hair, than to spend laborious days in poring over miserable books? This, at all events, appears to be the opinion of a high-school principal from the Middle West, whom I recently had the pleasure of hearing in an address on the subject of the classics. Among other things he said, "What does it signify to you and I whether John Milton and other old fogies like he wrote a *Midsummer Night's Dream* or not? Let each one study their own generation from things and not from books."

As a matter of fact, ever since I can remember I have been a reader, a lover, and a collector of books. I have not studied them for the sake of improving my mind, for that would have been impossible, but I have read them in the same spirit in which boys play ball, girls dress their dolls, men attend prize fights, and women

gossip about their neighbors. I have read them, as Macaulay says, "with my feet on the fender." The consequence is that, logic or no logic, reason or no reason, I am convinced that it is a good thing for a boy to acquire this harmless habit.

The way to begin, it seems to me, is to expose Mr. Boy at the outset to something which he really will read for the pure fun of the thing. I suggest *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, though several years ago, when I asked a certain high-school librarian to purchase them for her shelves, she held up her hands in horror, exclaiming, "You don't expect me to put them on my shelves, do you?" I replied, "I do. What is your objection to them?" "Why," she answered, "if I were to have those among my books, they would be in use all the time and would soon be worn out." She was quite right. There are also certain boys who like *Treasure Island*. A young gentleman of eight, whom I am proud to count among my friends, recently read Jack London's *Call of the Wild* with pleasure if not with understanding under my eye, though he knew it not, and I later found him devouring *Over the Top* and *My Four Years in Germany*. I have even seen him dipping into the *Literary Digest*.

When a boy is once started, as is that boy, on the downward path, the rest is easy. He has small need of teachers. All he needs is an easy-chair, leisure, and a collection of books. These, however, should be carefully selected by a skilled dietitian. The rations provided should not be too strong for youthful stomachs and should be balanced. They should not consist entirely of sweets. In other words, they should comprise a judicious selection of fiction, drama, poetry, biography, history, oratory, and essays.

In Grades VII and VIII, for instance, I suggest *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Call of the Wild*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Jules Verne*, *Kidnapped*, *Treasure Island*, *The Jungle Books*, Poe, Conan Doyle, and the Erckmann-Chatrian Novels—*Madame Thérèse*, *The Conscript of 1813*, *Waterloo*, and the *Plebiscite*. These latter are boys' books, told in the first person; they tell of war—war with Huns; they are works of art; they are historical in the right sense; written a generation ago, they still show a keen insight into the

Prussian character; and they breathe a hatred of war. For drama these seventh- and eighth-grade boys can perhaps enjoy *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* or *The Merchant of Venice*, and for poetry can be set on fire by short patriotic narratives, old and new. Their biography should be mostly travels. Paul du Chaillu's are capital.

In the ninth grade for fiction I recommend *David Copperfield*, *Kim*, *Captains Courageous*, some short stories, and a good modern novel—perhaps Mary Johnston's *Long Roll*, Winston Churchill's *Crisis*, Paul Leicester Ford's *Janice Meredith*, or Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's *Hugh Wynne*; for drama, *Julius Caesar*; for poetry, the *Odyssey*, Macaulay's *Lays*, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, *The Ancient Mariner*; for biography, Southey's *Nelson*; and for oratory, a few American speeches—especially Lincoln's, Roosevelt's, McAdoo's, and Wilson's. To these I would add a speech by John Rathom on German intrigue, which I heard last winter in Detroit. It was a perfect specimen of the Demosthenian oration in structure; it had all the interest of a Sherlock Holmes or Poe mystery story; and it was animated by the loftiest spirit of devotion to American ideals.

In Grade X, for fiction I suggest *The Tale of Two Cities*, *Tom Brown at Rugby*, *The Varmint*, *Stalky & Co.*, *Ivanhoe*, and *A Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, or their equivalent, if they have any. For drama I would provide *As You Like It*; for poetry, *Sohrab and Rustum*, *The Lady of the Lake*, Tennyson's *Idylls*, and Alfred Noyes's *Drake*. The last is a grand and thrilling epic. It should be got as speedily as possible to our boys, not only as poetry, but also as a link between England and America forged by a man who calls England his mother and America his sweetheart. For biography in this grade Elbert Hubbard's *Little Journeys to the Homes of American Business Men* are good, as are also Franklin's *Autobiography*, Lockhart's *Scott*, Macaulay's *Clive*, *Hastings*, and *Frederic*. The last is especially useful just now because it shows the Hohenzollern menace in its infancy. "You need an American Plutarch or Nepos," Dr. Bernard Dernberg once said to me. So far as I know this is the only true thing that any Prussian has said about America during the last four years.

Silas Marner and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* are ideal fiction for Grade XI; *Macbeth* and *She Stoops to Conquer* are the best drama; Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, Burns, and Noyes's *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* are the best poetry I know; Lincoln's speeches are the only oratory needed; and for biography I suggest Macaulay's *Johnson* and *Goldsmith*, Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, and Hallam Tennyson's *Memoirs of My Father*. The essay should now enter, not as represented by Bacon, Addison, Emerson, or Carlyle, they being usually remote from adolescent interests, but in the form of dignified and vital modern material. I am thinking of Roosevelt's *True Americanism*, Wilson's *On Being Human*, Jordan's *The Strength of being Clean*, Edward Ross's *Latter Day Saints and Sinners*, Briggs's *From School to College*, and Crothers' *The Evolution of the Gentleman*. After a boy has read some of these, perhaps he may be allowed to try Emerson's *Behavior* or Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*.

In the twelfth grade, for fiction I would provide *Stover at Yale* and *Tom Brown at Oxford*; for drama, *Hamlet* and *The Rivals*; for poetry, Milton, Wordsworth, and Browning; for essays, Stevenson and Lamb; for biography, Boswell; and for oratory, Burke. I have no patience with the enemies of Burke. Burke's *Conciliation* has always been one of the best things in our English course, and the war has made him more significant than ever before.

I see before me the high-school literature room of the future. It does not look like that of today. Its appearance and atmosphere suggest a library in a civilized home. There are wide tables, deep chairs, bookcases, pictures, books, rugs. Thither come pupils, not to recite, but to read. They are not compelled to read all of the books I have enumerated, but the books are there. If the children are exposed to them, it is my belief that they will catch the disease called bibliomania much more frequently than they now do, though I do not flatter myself that any widespread epidemic will result.